
Union Bower Community

The Union Bower community, located in what is now far eastern Irving, was established along the banks of the Elm Fork of the Trinity River in the mid-19th century. Several of the early settler families had come from the La Reunion colony located a few miles south of the Union Bower area. The colonists had come to Texas from France, Belgium, and Switzerland in the mid-1850s to form a socialist utopian community. By 1859, the colony was defunct, and several of the families settled in the area that would become known as Union Bower. Among the families from the colony that moved to the area between the forks were the Lanottes, the Joffres, the Farines, and the Voirins.

Residents cut cord wood from the heavily timbered land and raised fruits and vegetables, which they sold in the nearby Dallas market.

William and Virginia Smith moved to the area in 1879 and named the region Union Bower after a town in Pennsylvania where William Smith had taught school. The Smiths were not the first family in the area, but they were instrumental in bringing the residents of the area together to work for the development and progress of the community.

A non-denominational Sunday school was organized in 1885. A Methodist church was dedicated in the community in 1907. The Smith family donated land for a community cemetery in 1886, and also donated land on which a school was built in 1891. The school site was used until the 1960s.

By the middle of the twentieth century, the area's rural communities, including Union Bower, began a decline in population. Through the decades, small industry moved into the area, and by the time Irving annexed the Union Bower area in 1956, little remained of its rural roots.